

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 216
OFFERED BY M

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

2 This Act may be cited as the “Department of Vet-
3 erans Affairs Budget Planning Reform Act of 2015”.

4 SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF STRATEGIC PLANS TO IM-
5 PROVE PROGRAMS AND BENEFITS FOR VET-
6 ERANS.

7 (a) FUTURE-YEARS VETERANS PROGRAM.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 38, United
9 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the
10 following new section:

11 “§ 119. Future-Years Veterans Program

12 “(a) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary
13 shall submit to Congress each year, at or about the time
14 that the President’s budget is submitted to Congress pur-
15 suant to section 1105(a) of title 31, a Future-Years Vet-
16 erans Program reflecting the estimated expenditures and
17 proposed appropriations included in that budget. Any such
18 Future-Years Veterans Program shall cover the fiscal year

1 with respect to which the budget is submitted and at least
2 the four succeeding fiscal years.

3 “(b) CONSISTENCY.—(1) The Secretary shall ensure
4 that amounts described in subparagraph (A) of paragraph
5 (2) for any fiscal year are consistent with amounts de-
6 scribed in subparagraph (B) of such paragraph for that
7 fiscal year.

8 “(2) Amounts referred to in paragraph (1) are the
9 following:

10 “(A) The amounts specified in program and
11 budget information submitted to Congress by the
12 Secretary in support of expenditure estimates and
13 proposed appropriations in the budget submitted to
14 Congress by the President under section 1105(a) of
15 title 31 for any fiscal year, as shown in the Future-
16 Years Veterans Program submitted pursuant to sub-
17 section (a).

18 “(B) The total amounts of estimated expendi-
19 tures and proposed appropriations necessary to sup-
20 port the programs, projects, and activities of the De-
21 partment of Veterans Affairs included pursuant to
22 paragraph (5) of section 1105(a) of title 31 in the
23 budget submitted to Congress under that section for
24 any fiscal year.

1 “(c) CONTENTS.—The Future-Years Veterans Pro-
2 gram under subsection (a) shall set forth the five-year
3 plan of the Department to address the commitment of the
4 United States to veterans and the resources necessary to
5 meet that commitment and shall be developed and up-
6 dated, as appropriate, annually by the Secretary. Each
7 Future-Years Veterans Program shall include an expla-
8 nation of—

9 “(1) the information that was used to develop
10 program planning guidance for the Future-Years
11 Veterans Program; and

12 “(2) how the resource allocations included in
13 the Future-Years Veterans Program correlate to
14 such five-year strategy.

15 “(d) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall publish on
16 a publically accessible Internet website of the Department
17 each Future-Years Veterans Program submitted pursuant
18 to subsection (a).”.

19 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
20 tions at the beginning of such chapter is amended
21 by inserting after the item relating to section 118
22 the following new item:

“119. Future-Years Veterans Program.”.

23 (3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 119 of title 38,
24 United States Code, as added by paragraph (1),
25 shall apply with respect to the preparation and sub-

1 mission of the budget request for the Department of
2 Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2020 and fiscal
3 years thereafter.

4 (b) QUADRENNIAL VETERANS REVIEW.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Such chapter is further
6 amended by adding after section 119, as added by
7 subsection (a)(1), the following new section:

8 **“§ 120. Quadrennial veterans review**

9 “(a) REQUIREMENT.—(1) Not later than fiscal year
10 2019, and every fourth year thereafter, the Secretary shall
11 conduct a review of the strategy for meeting the commit-
12 ment of the United States to veterans and the resources
13 necessary to meet that commitment (in this section re-
14 ferred to as a ‘quadrennial veterans review’).

15 “(2) Each quadrennial veterans review shall include
16 a comprehensive examination of the policies and strategies
17 of the United States with respect to veterans, including
18 recommendations regarding the long-term strategy and
19 priorities for programs, services, benefits, and outcomes
20 regarding veterans and guidance on the programs, assets,
21 capabilities, budget, policies, and authorities of the De-
22 partment.

23 “(3) The Secretary shall conduct each quadrennial
24 veterans review in consultation with key officials of the
25 Department, the heads of other Federal agencies, and

1 other relevant governmental and nongovernmental enti-
2 ties, including State, local, and tribal government officials,
3 members of Congress, veterans service organizations, pri-
4 vate sector representatives, academics, and other policy ex-
5 perts.

6 “(4) The Secretary shall ensure that each quadren-
7 nial veterans review is coordinated with the Future-Years
8 Veterans Program required under section 119 of this title.

9 “(b) CONTENTS OF REVIEW.—In each quadrennial
10 veterans review, the Secretary shall—

11 “(1) delineate a veterans strategy consistent
12 with the commitment of the United States to vet-
13 erans and refine a strategy for the types of, and pro-
14 vision of, programs, services, benefits, and outcomes
15 consistent with current authorities and require-
16 ments;

17 “(2) outline and prioritize the full range of pro-
18 grams and capabilities regarding veterans provided
19 by the Federal Government;

20 “(3) identify the budget plan required to pro-
21 vide sufficient resources to successfully execute the
22 full range of such programs and capabilities;

23 “(4) include an assessment of the organiza-
24 tional alignment of the Department with respect to
25 the strategy referred to in paragraph (1) and the

1 programs and capabilities referred to in paragraph
2 (2);

3 “(5) review and assess the effectiveness of the
4 mechanisms of the Department for executing the
5 process of turning the requirements identified in the
6 quadrennial veterans review into a plan to meet such
7 requirements, including an expenditure plan for the
8 Department; and

9 “(6) identify emerging trends, problems, oppor-
10 tunities, and issues that could affect veterans or the
11 Department during the ten-year period following the
12 period covered by the review.

13 “(c) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—(1) The Secretary
14 shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of
15 the Senate and the House of Representatives a report re-
16 garding each quadrennial veterans review. The Secretary
17 shall submit the report in the year following the year in
18 which the review is conducted, but not later than the date
19 on which the President submits to Congress the budget
20 for the next fiscal year under section 1105 of title 31.

21 “(2) Each report submitted under paragraph (1)
22 shall include—

23 “(A) the results of the quadrennial veterans re-
24 view;

1 “(B) a description of the challenges to, and op-
2 portunities for, the assumed or defined veterans-re-
3 lated interests of the Nation that were examined for
4 the purposes of that review;

5 “(C) the strategy for meeting the Nation’s com-
6 mitment to veterans, including a prioritized list of
7 the missions of the Department;

8 “(D) a description of the interagency coopera-
9 tion, preparedness of Federal assets, infrastructure,
10 budget plan, and other elements of the programs
11 and policies of the Nation associated with the strat-
12 egy referred to in subsection (b)(1) that are required
13 to execute successfully the full range of programs
14 and capabilities identified in such strategy and the
15 programs and capabilities outlined under subsection
16 (b)(2);

17 “(E) an assessment of the organizational align-
18 ment of the Department with the strategy referred
19 to in subsection (b)(1) and the programs and capa-
20 bilities outlined under subsection (b)(2), including
21 the Department’s organizational structure, manage-
22 ment systems, budget and accounting systems,
23 human resources systems, procurement systems, and
24 physical and technical infrastructure;

1 “(F) a discussion of the status of cooperation
2 among Federal agencies in the effort to promote na-
3 tional support for veterans;

4 “(G) a discussion of the status of cooperation
5 between the Federal Government and State, local,
6 and tribal governments in supporting veterans and
7 providing programs, services, benefits, and outcomes
8 to assist veterans;

9 “(H) an explanation of any underlying assump-
10 tions used in conducting the review; and

11 “(I) any other matter the Secretary considers
12 appropriate.

13 “(d) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall publish on
14 a publically accessible Internet website of the Department
15 each quadrennial veterans review submitted pursuant to
16 subsection (c).”.

17 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
18 tions at the beginning of such chapter is amended
19 by inserting after the item relating to section 119,
20 as added by subsection (a)(2), the following new
21 item:

“120. Quadrennial Veterans Review.”.

22 (c) POLICY GUIDANCE.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Such chapter is further
24 amended by adding after section 120, as added by
25 subsection (b)(1), the following new section:

1 **“§ 121. Policy Guidance**

2 “The Secretary shall provide annually to the appro-
3 priate officials of the Department written policy guidance
4 for the preparation and review of the planning and pro-
5 gram recommendations and budget proposals of the ele-
6 ments of the Department of such officials. Such guidance
7 shall include guidance on the objectives of the Department
8 in accordance with Future-Years Veterans Program under
9 section 119 of this title and the quadrennial veterans re-
10 view under section 120 and the resource levels projected
11 to be available for the period of time for which such rec-
12 ommendations and proposals are to be effective.”.

13 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
14 tions at the beginning of such chapter is amended
15 by inserting after the item relating to section 120,
16 as added by subsection (b)(2), the following new
17 item:

“121. Quadrennial veterans review.”.

18 **SEC. 3. CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT**
19 **OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 38, United
21 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
22 lowing new section:

23 **“§ 323. Chief Strategy Officer**

24 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall designate
25 the Assistant Secretary whose functions include planning,

1 studies, and evaluations as the Chief Strategy Officer of
2 the Department. The Chief Strategy Officer shall advise
3 the Secretary on long-range strategy and implications.

4 “(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Chief Strategy Officer
5 is the principal advisor to the Secretary and other senior
6 officials of the Department, and shall provide independent
7 analysis and advice to the Secretary and such officials.
8 The Chief Strategy Officer shall carry out the following
9 responsibilities:

10 “(1) Conducting cost estimation and cost anal-
11 ysis for the programs of the Department.

12 “(2) Establishing policies for, and overseeing
13 the integration of, the planning, programming,
14 budgeting and execution process for the Depart-
15 ment.

16 “(3) Providing analysis and advice on matters
17 relating to the planning and programming phase of
18 the planning, programming, budgeting and execution
19 process, and the preparation of materials and guid-
20 ance for such process, as directed by the Secretary,
21 working in coordination with the Assistant Secretary
22 for Management.

23 “(4) Developing and executing the Future-
24 Years Veterans Program of the Department, as
25 specified under section 119 of this title.

1 “(5) Developing resource discussions relating to
2 requirements under consideration in the quadrennial
3 veterans review under section 120 of this title.

4 “(6) Formulating study guidance for analysis of
5 alternatives for programs and initiatives, including
6 any necessary acquisitions, development, or procure-
7 ment commensurate with such alternatives, and per-
8 formance of such analysis as directed by the Sec-
9 retary.

10 “(7) Reviewing, analyzing, and evaluating pro-
11 grams for executing approved strategies and policies,
12 ensuring that information on programs and expected
13 outcomes is presented accurately and completely.

14 “(8) Ensuring that the costs of programs and
15 alternatives are presented accurately and completely
16 by assisting in establishing standards, policies, and
17 procedures for the conduct of cost estimation and
18 cost analysis throughout the Department, including
19 guidance relating to the proper selection of con-
20 fidence levels in cost estimates generally and for spe-
21 cific programs of the Department.

22 “(9) Conducting studies at the request of the
23 Secretary regarding costs, policy assumptions, and
24 strategic implications of current policies and possible
25 alternatives.

1 “(10) Communicating directly to the Secretary
2 and the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs about
3 matters for which the Chief Strategy Officer is re-
4 sponsible without obtaining the approval or concur-
5 rence of any other official within the Department.”.

6 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
7 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting
8 after the item relating to section 322 the following new
9 item:

 “323. Chief Strategy Officer.”.

